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How do the ideals of social justice, collaboration, critical self-evaluation and diversity align with our course objectives and outcomes, and pertain to us in our role as pedagogues?

The Conceptual Framework of the School of Education states that, ‘teaching is an art that incorporates critical self-reflection, openness to new ideas, practices and technologies and that focuses on the individual learner’s needs and promotes growth.” Teacher action research is a conceptual, social and cultural framework for doing research. It uses different methodology and forms of inquiry. Action research studies a problematic situation in an ongoing fashion and takes action to change the situation. One of the objectives of the course is to help develop in the teacher-researcher an “understanding of the ethical issues of research” and to research topic that is “relevant” to the interest of the teacher/students. This objective aligns with the Conceptual Framework of the School of Education. Essential to teacher-researcher is self-reflection and an openness to ‘new ideas and practices.’ As a teacher-researcher seeks to improve practice in the classroom, self-reflection is involved. Action research encourages self-reflection. It is important when research issues change and actions are improved or discarded or become more focused. Understanding the benefits and shortcoming of research require self-reflection.

In action research, teachers-researchers are the agents and source of educational reform. Action research empowers teachers to own professional knowledge, as they create, interact, transform and apply such knowledge. Action research enables teachers to reflect on their practice, to improve it, becoming more self-governing in professional judgment.

Action research is rooted in a concern for social justice. A problem is identified; there is an inquiry process, and a resolution is found for the problematic situation. This action research may lead to discovery of a successful resolution that will improve teaching/learning. The idea of ‘social justice’ is clearly evident when practice is questioned, researched and changed for the betterment of the students. Social justice is about changing a system that does not work for the equity of all persons involved. As a teacher-researcher focuses on a particular problem in the classroom, researches effective methods, a positive outcome will result in the classroom, and improvement of students’ learning and thereby improving their lives. This is certainly in line with social justice. Educational research makes a positive difference in the lives of teachers and students. Teacher action research plays a prominent role in making research work to affect teaching and learning and to transform the school into a truly equitable democracy.